



HOPE, LIFE, and Palmetto Fellows  
Scholarship Programs

***Guidelines for Appeal***  
***2005-06***

## HOPE, LIFE, and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Appeals Outline

### HOPE and LIFE Scholarship:

The student is notified through the established institutional notification process that he/she is not eligible to receive the HOPE/LIFE Scholarship.

### Palmetto Fellows Scholarship:

The student is notified by CHE that his/her Palmetto Fellows Scholarship was discontinued.

Student obtains an Application for Appeal from the Commission on Higher Education's Web site at:  
<http://www.che.sc.gov/StudentServices/Appeals/AppealsHm.htm>  
or by calling 1-877-349-7183.

Student must submit the following:

1. Completed Application for Appeal;
2. Detailed letter of request for appeal, written and signed by student, that describes the extenuating circumstance(s);
3. Supporting documentation;
4. Academic transcript(s) from current and any previous institutions attended in an officially sealed envelope; and
5. Mail all documentation to the Commission on Higher Education postmarked by **October 14<sup>th</sup>** for the appeal to be considered.

The Commission on Higher Education will review all HOPE, LIFE, and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship appeals applications and will notify the student of the rendered decision and if approved, the institution will also be notified.

Upon receipt of a denial decision letter, the student will have 10 business days from receipt of letter to submit in writing a request to have the Appeals Committee reconsider their appeal.

**Decisions should be rendered by January 1<sup>st</sup>. The decision rendered by the Appeals Committee is final.**

# HOPE, LIFE, and Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Appeals Regulation

## **Definition of Terms**

An **appeal** shall be defined as the complete and timely documentation of an extenuating circumstance(s) that causes a student enrolled in college to fail to meet the academic requirements (cumulative grade point average and/or credit hours) for regaining or renewing a LIFE Scholarship or renewing a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship. An **appeal** is also defined as the complete and timely documentation of an extenuating circumstance(s) that causes a HOPE Scholarship recipient to not receive the maximum available terms of funding. **Students who fail to meet the initial eligibility criteria or who were never eligible to receive the HOPE, LIFE, or Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Programs are not eligible to submit an appeal.**

An **extenuating circumstance** shall be defined as a situation that involves a serious health condition of the student, death or serious health condition of an immediate family member, or a traumatic/extraordinary event.

An **immediate family member** shall be defined as the spouse, great-grandparents, grandparents, parents or legal guardians, brothers, sisters, or children of either the student or the student's spouse.

A **serious health condition** shall be defined as an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves: (1) Any period of incapacity or treatment in connection with or consequent to inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility; or (2) Any period of incapacity requiring absence from classes for more than five consecutive class days that also involves continuing treatment by (or under the supervision of) a health care provider; or (3) Continuing treatment by (or under the supervision of) a health care provider for a chronic or long-term health condition that is incurable or so serious that, if not treated, would likely result in a period of incapacity that would adversely affect the academic performance of the student.

A **traumatic/extraordinary event** shall be defined as a sudden, uncontrollable event which adversely affects the student's academic performance, such as a natural disaster (earthquake, hurricane, tornado, etc.), divorce, rape, required missionary duty, active military duty, death of a significant non-immediate family member, or any other events deemed traumatic/extraordinary by the Commission.

## **Extenuating Circumstances**

Extenuating circumstances are the following situations:

- Serious health condition of the student;
- Death or serious health condition of an immediate family member; or
- Traumatic / Extraordinary event

In order to determine if a particular situation is an eligible extenuating circumstance, refer to the above "Definition of Terms." Please be aware that poor academic performance prior to the documented extenuating circumstance will impact the outcome of an appeal. Also note that a traumatic event does not include college adjustment issues, such as homesickness, problems with roommates, problems with the faculty or staff at the college or university, difficult course-load, misunderstanding of scholarship requirements, misadvisement by financial aid officers or advisors, dependent care issues, transportation problems, financial issues, exceptions to

scholarship regulation (initial eligibility, transfer issues, exceeding terms of eligibility), etc. *This is not an exhaustive list.* Other issues may be deemed as inappropriate for appeal.

## **Notification of Scholarship Eligibility**

### **HOPE and LIFE Scholarship:**

Each institution is responsible for notifying students about financial aid awards through normal institutional notification procedures, such as personal financial award accounts within the institutional system available for all students to review; telephone notification; award letters; and student bills. Therefore, each student awarded the HOPE or LIFE Scholarship must make himself or herself aware of the institutional notification process and his or her HOPE or LIFE Scholarship eligibility. If a HOPE or LIFE Scholarship recipient finds that he or she is ineligible and would like to file an appeal, appeal applications are available on the Commission on Higher Education's Web site at <http://www.che.sc.gov/StudentServices/Appeals/AppealsHm.htm>.

### **Palmetto Fellows Scholarship:**

Institutions must submit an electronic roster (either Excel or ASCII format) of all students who do not meet the continued eligibility requirements to the Commission on Higher Education. The roster shall include the name, social security number, and permanent home address for each student. The Commission must receive the roster no later than two weeks after the completion of summer school.

The Commission will notify each Palmetto Fellow in writing of the discontinuation of their Palmetto Fellows Scholarship and provide information about the opportunity to appeal. If a student wishes to submit an appeal, then he or she must follow the approved appeals process.

## **Filing an Appeal**

The following is a checklist of the appeals documentation the student must submit to be considered:

### ☐ **Application for Appeal**

- 1) The student may obtain an Application for Appeal from the Commission on Higher Education's Web site at <http://www.che.sc.gov/StudentServices/Appeals/AppealsHm.htm>.
- 2) The application must be **completed and signed by the student.**

### ☐ **Letter of Request (Must be written and signed by student)**

- 1) The student must state the reason for appealing and describe the extenuating circumstance(s) that prevented him/her from renewing the scholarship.
- 2) The student must provide an explanation as to why he/she did not attend any term during the academic year in question, including Maymester and summer school (Sessions I & II). It is expected that students will attend Maymester and/or summer school to increase GPA and/or credit hours. Financial situations will not be taken into consideration for not attending summer school.
- 3) If the student is appealing because of poor academic performance, the student must explain to the Committee whether he/she used the institutional appeals process to have the grades changed due to an extenuating circumstance each term. The student must also explain each term of poor academic performance.
- 4) If the student is appealing due to a death of a non-immediate family member, the student must explain in detail (1) the extent of the relationship; (2) how this situation

- affected his/her inability to meet academic requirements to renew the scholarship; and  
(3) how the situation meets the definition of a traumatic/extraordinary event.
- 5) If the student is appealing due to a chronic or long-term health condition, the student must state whether he/she registered with the Institutional Disabilities Office.

## ☐ **Supporting Documentation**

Students are ultimately responsible for providing sufficient supporting documentation with their appeal which satisfies the burden of proof of an extenuating circumstance such as:

### **For medical-related appeals:**

- 1) Signed letter from the physician on letterhead (medical, psychiatrist, and/or psychologist) detailing duration and extent of serious health condition (this letter must include specific details and time period regarding the health condition) and any recommendations made regarding school non-attendance (fall, spring, Maymester and summer);
- 2) Hospital invoice and/or insurance statements;
- 3) For chronic or long-term health conditions, official letter from the Institutional Disabilities Office verifying whether the student is registered with their office to take a reduced course load; and/or
- 4) If student served as a primary caregiver, documentation detailing time period in which student served in that capacity from doctor.

### **For death-related appeals:**

- 1) Death certificate;
- 2) Newspaper obituary;
- 3) Funeral program; and/or
- 4) Letter from counselor if counseling was received.

### **Other relevant documentation:**

- 1) For poor academic performance, official letter from the college or university verifying the outcome of the institutional appeal or a statement from the student to explain why he/she did not utilize the institutional appeals process; and/or
- 2) Any other documentation, which will substantiate the appeal.

## ☐ **Official Academic Transcripts**

- 1) The student must request an official transcript(s) from current and any previous institutions attended. Academic transcript(s) must be in an officially sealed envelope from the institution(s) and may be mailed with the appeals application or be mailed directly from the institution to the Commission on Higher Education, Attn: Scholarship Appeals, 1333 Main Street, Suite 200, Columbia, SC 29201 or be included with the Application for Appeal. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that all transcripts are sent by the institution and received by the Commission.

## ☐ **Submission of Application for Appeal**

- 1) The completed application and all other documentation must be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education postmarked by **October 14<sup>th</sup>** of the academic year that scholarship aid is requested. Incomplete applications will not be considered. It is

the student's responsibility to ensure that all documents are submitted to the Commission by the deadline.

### **Notification Process for Appeals Decisions**

Once the decision regarding an appeal has been determined, the Commission on Higher Education will notify the student in writing, and, if approved, the institution will also be notified.

Upon receipt of a denial decision letter, the student will have 10 business days from receipt of letter to submit in writing a request to have the Appeals Committee reconsider his or her appeal. Decisions should be rendered by January 1<sup>st</sup>. **The Appeals Committee's decision is final.**

### **Approval of Appeals**

If an appeal is granted to a student who does not have the required cumulative 3.0 grade point average or the required number of credit hours, he or she may receive scholarship funding only for the academic year for which the appeal was granted. After the completion of that academic year, the student is expected to comply with all eligibility requirements in order to receive scholarship funding for the next academic year.

### **Appeals Committee**

The Appeals Committee will be comprised of the following at a minimum:

- ◆ One representatives from the staff of the S.C. Commission on Higher Education;
- ◆ One representative from the board of the Commission on Higher Education;
- ◆ Three institutional representatives of which one will be from a public senior college, one from a private senior college, and one from a two-year/technical college;
- ◆ One public or private high school guidance counselor;
- ◆ One business representative; and
- ◆ One representative from the General Assembly or legislative staff member.



SOUTH CAROLINA COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION  
HOPE, LIFE, AND PALMETTO FELLOWS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS

APPLICATION FOR APPEAL  
Deadline: October 14, 2005

**Part I. Student Information (Please Print)**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Street City State Zip code  
Phone Number: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

What year did you graduate from high school? \_\_\_\_\_ What term and year did you first enroll in college? \_\_\_\_\_

Institution that denied scholarship eligibility: \_\_\_\_\_

List any previous institutions attended: \_\_\_\_\_

Scholarship Program: ☐ HOPE Scholarship ☐ LIFE Scholarship ☐ Palmetto Fellows Scholarship

Check all that apply:

1. I am appealing: ☐ Deficient Credit Hours ☐ Deficient Grade Point Average ☐ Other
2. Extenuating Circumstance: \_\_\_\_\_ Serious health condition of the student  
\_\_\_\_\_ Death or serious health condition of an immediate family member  
\_\_\_\_\_ Traumatic/Extraordinary Event

**Part II. Appeal Documents**

In order for the appeal to be considered by the Commission, the following **must** be submitted:

1. Completed Application for Appeal and signed by student;
2. Detailed letter of request for appeal, **written and signed by student**, that describes the extenuating circumstance(s);
3. Sufficient supporting documentation;
4. Academic transcript(s) in an officially sealed envelope from current and any previous institutions attended; and
5. All documents must be mailed to the Commission on Higher Education postmarked by **October 14, 2005**.

**IT IS THE STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT ALL DOCUMENTS ARE POSTMARKED BY OCTOBER 14, 2005. INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.**

**Part III. Student Signature**

The student is responsible for providing to the Commission on Higher Education any and all evidence, which the student believes satisfies the burden of proof. The Commission will consider any and all evidence provided concerning such claim but will not necessarily regard any single item of evidence as conclusive.

I understand that decisions will be based entirely on written documents postmarked by the October 14<sup>th</sup> deadline. I also understand that my appeal may not be granted. Therefore, I must take the necessary action to secure funds to pay my tuition and fees during the time the appeal is being reviewed. I understand that if the appeal is granted, the scholarship funds may be awarded retroactively.

I agree that the information requested on this form may be released to the Commission on Higher Education and authorize that any information, including medical records, legal documents, etc. be released to the Commission on Higher Education. I also understand that I will have ten business days from the receipt of the decision letter to submit my request to have the Appeals Committee reconsider my appeal, if denied. I also understand that the decision rendered by the Appeals Committee is final.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature (required)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

***I agree that any information regarding my appeal may be shared with my parents or legal guardians. If this is not signed, then the appeal will only be discussed with the student.***

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature (optional)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date